Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, August 17, 2012

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Action Item Calendar

Today (August 17): Personnel Assignment Process file update due
September 10: IMS Roles Form due
November 1: Presidential Scholar nominations due

Note from Commissioner Gist:

1. **Year Two Progress Update on Race to the Top highlights achievements**

All of us were deeply honored two years ago when the U.S. Department of Education awarded our state a $75-million Race to the Top grant to transform education and to accelerate our schools toward greatness. As we reach the midway point in our four-year grant, Governor Chafee and I have taken a moment to look back on our accomplishments to date and to look ahead at the challenges before us in the next year of our Race to the Top initiative.

On Monday (August 20), we will release the Year Two Progress Update on Race to the Top in Rhode Island, which shows how we have invested these federal funds wisely to improve teaching and learning in our state. Using Race to the Top funds, we have:

- implemented educator evaluations in all schools and districts;
- launched a system that makes evaluation tools, guidance, and data accessible in one location;
- begun an induction program for all new teachers;
- trained nearly 5,000 educators for transition to the new Common Core State Standards;
- developed virtual-learning instruction in mathematics to help struggling students; and
- provided support to help turn around low-achieving schools.

In the coming school year, we look forward to rolling out our Academy for Transformative Leadership, which will prepare aspiring principals to take on leadership roles in our lowest-achieving schools, and to launching an online system for educators that will bring together our data on students, curriculum, assessments, and professional development.

The Governor and I want to thank you and your leadership team, your teachers, and your students for your effort and enthusiasm over the past two years. Race to the Top has provided Rhode Island with an unprecedented opportunity to improve teaching and learning, and we are confident that, working together, we can continue leading the way toward making our schools America's best.

We will post the Year Two Progress Update on our website early next week, under "News" and under "Race to the Top."

From RIDE:

2. **RIDE to release Title III Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives reports**

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

The Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives report is an important source of information about Title III sub-grantee performance and accountability regarding programs for English language learners (ELLs).

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) specifies that school districts using Title III federal funds to provide supplemental educational services to ELLs must meet three Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) defined by Title III as:

- annual increases in the number or percentage of children making progress in learning English;
- annual increases in the number or percentage of children attaining English proficiency by the end of each school year, as determined by a valid and reliable assessment of English proficiency; and
- adequate yearly progress for children with limited proficiency in English.

Title III accountability is comparable in some ways to the NCLB accountability requirements for schools and school districts receiving federal Title I funds (compensatory education programs targeted to low-income areas). In contrast to Title I, though, NCLB for Title III is an accountability-reporting system for school districts but not for individual schools within school districts. The Title I accountability system assesses the academic achievement of all students in grades 3 through 8 plus grade 11, while the Title III accountability system assesses the English language proficiency of all ELL students in grades K-12 as well as the academic achievement of ELLs in grades 3 through 8 plus 11. The accountability system defined by NCLB for Title I is used statewide at all schools whether or not Title I funds are received; however, Rhode Island applies Title III accountability targets only to Title III subgrantees (either individual LEAs or Title III consortia).

The reports were mailed to you yesterday (August 16) and will be posted on the RIDE website on August 31. Please refer any questions to Bob Measel, ELL Specialist, Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum (robert.measel@ride.ri.gov or 222-8480).

3. **RIDE rolling out next phase of Data Quality Initiative**

Please see this notice from our Office of Data, Analysis and Research:

As you may be aware, RIDE is implementing a Data Quality Initiative, as part of the State Longitudinal Data Systems grant. Data quality will be a higher priority than ever with the IMS, EPSS, and other new systems that rely on student data coming on board this fall and that will depend on daily uploads. Data-quality training and communications are being incorporated as much as possible into other RIDE initiatives, such as the Data Use PD, in order to consolidate efforts as much as possible. Data Managers will be a critical audience, and they will receive frequent communications and support on data-quality issues during the coming school year. RIDE staff members have begun reaching out to Data Managers about plans for the coming year. Please encourage your Data Manager to stay abreast of the Data Quality Initiative (DQI) and to attend DQI events whenever possible this year. For more information about this initiative, please visit the DQI page

on our website, at http://www.ride.ri.gov/dataworks/dataquality.aspx, or contact Jan Mermin, at jan.mermin@ride.ri.gov or 222-4710.

4. **PARCC to release sample test items**

Please see this announcement from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

We are pleased to announce the first release of sample item and task prototypes for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). As a member of PARCC, Rhode Island is committed to working collaboratively with other states in the consortium to develop a common set of grades 3-through-11 summative assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The primary purpose of sharing item and task prototypes is to provide information and to support educators as we transition to the CCSS and the PARCC assessments. The dynamic, online prototypes presented on the PARCC website are designed to shine a light on important elements of the CCSS and to show how critical content in the standards may be manifested on next-generation, technology-based PARCC assessments. The *public* release of the items will occur on Monday (August 20). Before the public release, you can use this username and password to view the site:

http://www2.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes

Username: parcc
Password: achieve12

The PARCC sample item and task prototypes should be viewed as one of the many types of materials educators can use during the transition to the CCSS and PARCC. Students and parents may also find the sample item and task prototypes to be a useful resource for learning more about the CCSS and about how state assessments may appear in the future.

In addition to the released sample item and task prototypes, the website provides other ancillary materials developed to build understanding of how the sample item and task prototypes illuminate the richness of the CCSS. These materials include:

- PowerPoint presentations in English language arts/literacy and mathematics to explain the advances planned for the PARCC assessments; and
- item-specific information, which includes alignment with the standards and scoring processes.

This initial release of 26 sample item and task prototypes is just the beginning. Over time, additional sample item and task prototypes and rubrics will be posted to the website to represent the full range of assessment tasks that will be included on actual PARCC assessments beginning in the 2014-15 school year. In the coming months, these additions will help to paint a more complete picture of the PARCC assessment design in each content area and grade level.

For questions about the release of these item and task prototypes or any other questions about the PARCC assessment, please contact Phyllis Lynch at phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov.

5. **RIDE announces shut-down of IMS development site**

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

The Instructional Management System (IMS) development site, which LEAs have been using to enter curriculum, make configurations, and train, will be shut down on August 24 to accommodate final testing and roll-over to the full production version. The live production IMS will be available to LEAs on September 10. As a result, LEAs will not have access to any part of the IMS between August 24 and September 10.

All configurations that were made and elements that were loaded into the development IMS will be saved and copied to the production version. LEAs that are not able to complete work in the IMS prior to August 24 may resume that work on September 10.

Also, LEAs are reminded to complete the IMS Deployment Guide (http://www.ride.ri.gov/Division-EEIE/DOCS/IMS/IMS_Deployment_Guide.pdf) prior to launching the IMS. The guide covers important decisions that must be made, roles that must be filled, training that must be accomplished, and communication plans that must be in place in order to ensure a successful deployment. It also contains a form identifying the various personnel who will fill required IMS roles within the LEA that must be completed and returned to RIDE. We need this information to plan for and provide the necessary support for LEA deployment and ongoing use of the IMS. The form can be filled out electronically and e-mailed to RIDE or completed online, at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Division-EEIE/DOCS/IMS/District_IMS_Roles_Form.pdf.

Please refer any questions to Bob Measel (robert.measel@ride.ri.gov or 222-8480) or Heather Heineke (heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov or 222-8493).

6. **RIDE to release competitive-grant application for developing, piloting performance-based compensation systems**

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

This week, RIDE held an information session for district teams considering applying for the performance-based compensation grant competition. Materials from this session will be posted on the performance-based compensation page of the RIDE website. The grant application will be released on Tuesday (August 22) and will be posted on the same page. As a result of feedback received at the session, the deadline for submitting an application for funding has been extended to **October 10**. The web page can be found at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/CompReform.aspx.

7. **RIDE recruiting teachers to preview, pilot-test new interim-assessment items**

Please see this announcement from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

> To continue with the development of the interim assessments, RIDE is recruiting teachers to pilot-test constructed-response items with students. RIDE is recruiting teachers in grades 4 through 12 for mathematics and ELA. The tests will be about 1 hour each – 1 hour for ELA, 1 hour for math – but can be taken across multiple sessions if necessary. Test materials will be made available the week of September 4 and will need to be mailed back to Measured Progress no later than September 20.
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> This is an excellent opportunity for students to experience CCSS items and for teachers to preview items and their students' responses. The student responses will then be used to create scoring materials for scoring practice in the future.
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> If you are interested or want more information, please contact Jessica Brown (jessica.brown@ride.ri.gov or 222-8253) as soon as possible.

8. **RIDE selects members for PARCC Educator Leader Cadre**

Please see this announcement from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

> RIDE is pleased to announce the membership of Rhode Island's PARCC Educator Leader Cadre (ELC). Each state in the PARCC consortium is creating an ELC to support the transition to the Common Core State Standards and PARCC. All ELCs will meet several times throughout each year at a consortium level to network and be trained together through in-person and virtual meetings. The ELC is a team of 24 members that will help lead implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the transition to the PARCC assessment in Rhode Island. Cadre members will become leaders in Rhode Island by supporting and sharing information with other educators in their schools, districts, and professional organizations. Rhode Island's ELC will share best practices regarding implementation and use of PARCC materials, engage in reviewing PARCC-developed – and PARCC-state developed – instructional materials, and become active leaders in state and local implementation efforts.

Rhode Island PARCC Educator Leader Cadre

Debra A. Scarpelli	Middle School Mathematics
	Slater Jr. High School, Pawtucket
Dr. Pam O'Day	Literacy Specialist
	East Bay Educational Collaborative
Judy Droitcour	Director Center for Mathematics Educators
	East Bay Educational Collaborative
Paula Dillon	Assistant Superintendent
	East Greenwich
Dr. Susan Vander Does	Co-director

	RI Writing Project
Kim Ramos	Elementary Teacher North Kingstown
Julie Motta	Director of ESL Pawtucket School Department
Jayne Berghorn	Reading Specialist R IASCD
Julie Lima Boyle	ELA Curriculum Coordinator Coventry High School
Debra Lancia	District Math Coach Cranston
Jaime Crowley	Principal Thompson Middle School, Newport
Linda Paolillo	Assistant Director Kingston Hill Academy
Carol Blanchette	Assistant Superintendent Chariho Regional School District
Lois Short	Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Development Burrillville
Audra McPhillips	Mathematics PD Specialist West Warwick
Janice Mesolello	English PD Specialist Johnston
Jason Masterson	Assistant Principal North Cumberland Middle School, Cumberland
Catherine Boutin	Mathematics Grade Level Leader Deering Middle School, West Warwick
Dr. Michael Barnes	Superintendent Foster-Glocester
Renee Palazzo	Assistant Principal Smithfield High School
Kathy Almanzor	Curriculum Director Jamestown
Dr. Colleen Mercurio	Principal Hoxsie Elementary School, Warwick
Rachel Mellion	Exec. Director of Curriculum Development & Implementation Providence

Dr. Cornelis DeGroot	Associate Professor University of Rhode Island

9. RIDE provides information about evaluation-system reporting requirements

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

> Standard Six of the Evaluation Systems Standards establishes the expectation that districts report evaluation data to RIDE. Evaluation data is utilized for certification-renewal decisions as well as for quality-assurance monitoring of evaluation systems. In addition to informing on-going model improvements, data will assist in understanding the fidelity of implementation in each LEA.
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> Additional information about evaluation-system reporting requirements, including the data elements that will be reported to RIDE through the Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS), will be available on the RIDE website by Monday (August 20), at:
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> http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/EdEvalAnnounce.aspx

10. RIDE announces Summer Academy make-up dates for new hires

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

> To accommodate late hires, RIDE has scheduled an additional Academy for personnel evaluating teachers and one for personnel evaluating building administrators – both to take place next month. The make-up Academy for personnel evaluating teachers will be take place over a three-week span on September 13, 14, 20, and 27. The make-up Academy for personnel evaluating building administrators will take place September 13 and 14. Both Academies will take place at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative (640 George Washington Highway, Lincoln) and will cover the exact same content as the Summer Academies.
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> Registration for the make-up Academies will be available starting Monday (August 20). Evaluators can register by going to the Workshop Calendar in eRIDE, at:
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> http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx

From the U.S. Department of Education:

11. Department announces Race to the Top – District competition

Please see this message from the Office of Communications and Outreach:

The U.S. Department of Education announced that it has finalized the application for the 2012 Race to the Top-District competition, which will provide nearly $400 million to support school districts in implementing local reforms that will personalize learning, close achievement gaps, and take full advantage of 21st-century tools that prepare each student for college and their careers. The program sets a high bar to fund those districts that have a track record of success, clear vision for reform, and innovative plans to transform the learning environment and accelerate student achievement.

The 2012 final program criteria invites applications from districts or groups of districts proposing to serve at least 2,000 students with 40 percent or more qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. Districts will choose to apply for funding to support learning strategies that personalize education in all or a set of schools, within specific grade levels, or select subjects. In addition, districts must demonstrate a commitment to Race to the Top's four core reform areas and have signoff on their plan from the district superintendent or CEO, local school board president, and local teacher union or association president (where applicable) in order to be eligible.

Applicants from all districts are invited to apply. The Department plans to support high-quality proposals from applicants across a variety of districts, including rural and non-rural as well as those already participating in a Race to the Top state grant and districts not participating. These 4-year awards will range from $5 million to $40 million, depending on the population of students served through the plan. The Department is expecting to make 15 to 25 awards.

More information, including the finalized application for the Race to the Top-District competition, can be found at:

www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district.

The Department is requesting interested districts to submit their intent to apply by **August 30**, and will offer webinars and conference calls over the coming weeks to provide technical assistance. Applications are due October 30, with awards being announced no later than December 31.

12. **Alliance of federal agencies announces Stop Bullying Video Challenge**

Please see this notice from the Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention, an alliance of six federal departments, including the Department of Education:

Last week, Secretary Duncan called on America's youth to take the Stop Bullying Video Challenge.

Today, we ask you to follow his lead.

On behalf of the Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention, encourage the youth in your life to submit original PSAs, 30 to 60 seconds in length, that showcase ways they are taking action against bullying and promoting a culture of kindness and respect in their communities.

We're looking for informative and entertaining videos that a send positive message to youth about the importance of being "more than a bystander" to bullying in their schools and communities.

Full details about the contest, including submission guidelines and rules for eligibility are available at stopbullying.challenge.gov. Please note that our deadline for submissions is October 14, at 11 p.m. Youth between 13 and 18 years old are eligible to participate; however, those under 18 years of age must have permission from a parent or guardian. The contest winner will receive a grand prize of $2,000, with the two runner-ups earning $500 each.

13. **National Assessment Governing Board seeks nominations**

Please see this notice from the National Assessment Governing Board:

The National Assessment Governing Board is currently seeking nominations of qualified individuals to serve as members of the Board for a four-year term, beginning October 1, 2013. Congress established the 26-member Board to set policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as The Nation's Report Card, which informs the public about student achievement nationwide in a number of core subjects. The Secretary of Education will appoint the members from a list of finalists submitted by the Board.

For 2013, the Board is seeking nominations for five positions in the following categories: elementary-school principal; testing and measurement expert; Democratic state legislator; and general-public representative (2 positions). The deadline for receiving nominations is **October 12**.

More information about the nominations process can be found at www.nagb.org/nominations2013.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx